

Completing “State and Revolution”

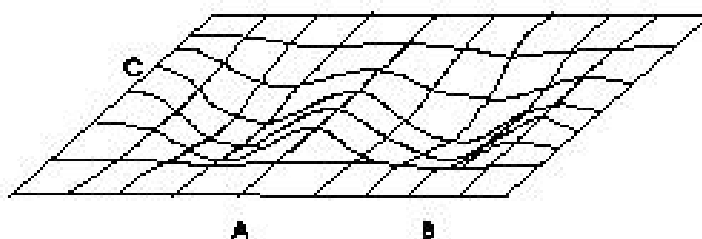
The [MIA endnote](#) to “[The State and Revolution](#)” says, among other things, that “According to Lenin's plan, “The State and Revolution” was to have consisted of seven chapters, but he did not write the seventh, “The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917”, and only a detailed plan has remained.”

Alas, we do not even have the “detailed plan” for the seventh chapter. But we can note that “The State and Revolution”, interrupted as it was by the Great October Revolution, is a work in progress. Even if the final chapter had been written, this would have been so. Both the book, and the circumstances of its writing, problematise the question of revolution.

In “[New Tools for Marxists](#)”, attached and linked below, the late South African revolutionary [Ron Press](#) wrote:

*“...the standard Marxist idea that society passes in a linear manner from primitive communism via class struggle to the ultimate victory when the working class replaces capitalism with a classless society is **an unattainable myth**. Especially when a classless society was taken to mean the establishment of order and stability, in fact stasis. The theories [outlined above] indicate that stasis means the inevitable sudden crossover into chaos and collapse.*

‘Lenin in State and Revolution continued the work of Engels and Marx in outlining the parameters which form the basis for the definition of systems indicated by points (a) and (b). It is interesting that they did not define the form or structure which socialism will have. Lenin recognised these new structures when they emerged. He initiated the slogan “all power to the soviets”.’



Ron Press is saying that the theory of the State, and of the “withering away” of the State, in Marx, Engels and Lenin is not wrong, yet these three did not have the full theoretical means to appreciate in full how “stateless” systems can and do work in nature and in human society.

The revolutionaries of today have an advantage over those of a century ago. That being the case, we might imagine a “State

and Revolution” for today, that would include not only the material that Lenin would have included in 1917 if he had had the time, but also material that Lenin would have included in the intervening period up to the present time, if he had had the knowledge of it.

Ron Press’s article gives a good start for that work. Please download it and read it. The two diagrams above, relating to the “[Strange Attractor](#)” of [Chaos Theory](#), are from the article.

The matter sits like this: In the past, “stateless” ungoverned systems could be postulated but not described or fully imagined. The “withering away of the state” remained a somewhat mystical, and to its opponents, ridiculous concept. But now, because of the theoretical advances that Ron Press shows us, it can be seen that most systems (both human and natural) operate in fact without a “state” (or king, for that matter) and that the “state” is the exception, and not the rule. Further, the imposition of a “state”, far from being the guarantee of order, is, according to chaos theory, the certain harbinger, not of stasis, but of disorder.

This is an unexpected vindication of Marxism, but a highly useful one. It means that future revolutionaries will have the possibility to see much further forward than was the case in Lenin’s time.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [New tools for Marxists, 1994, Ron Press](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).